

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 3, 2009

The Honorable John P. Murtha
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable C.W. Bill Young
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Murtha and Ranking Member Young:

As you begin preparing your fiscal year 2010 Department of Defense appropriations bill, we respectfully request an appropriation of \$7.5 million for the Bone Marrow Failure Disease research program.

Bone marrow failure diseases—including aplastic anemia, myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS), and paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria (PNH)—occur when stem cells inside the bone marrow stop making enough healthy blood cells. These life-threatening, non-contagious diseases can strike any person of any age, of any gender or any race, in any neighborhood anywhere in the world.

Recent anecdotal data indicate that members of the Armed Forces who were deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan may have been exposed to environmental contaminants associated with these diseases. Though they affect thousands of men, women, and children every year, we still know remarkably little about what causes these diseases, and we know even less about how to neutralize them.

Last year, thanks to your support, Congress recognized the urgent need to investigate bone marrow failure disorders. The Department of Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2009 provided \$5 million for the Bone Marrow Failure Disease research initiative within the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program. This much-needed funding has given investigators a stable source of support to augment our basic understanding of these diseases. By studying military personnel who have been diagnosed with these disorders, we can gain a much better understanding of what may be causing them. Most important, we can also begin to understand how to protect and treat members of the Armed Forces—and the general public—who contract these life-threatening diseases.

We understand that you, like Congress, are faced with a number of competing budget priorities this fiscal year. Nonetheless, we respectfully urge you to provide \$7.5 million for the Bone Marrow Failure Disease research initiative in fiscal year 2010 through the Defense Department's Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program. Thank you for your leadership and attention to our request.

Sincerely,





Betty Sutton

Marci Emery

Jim McHenry

Ed Sabath

John R

Herb Allen

Jim Phillips

Michael M. Allen

John F. Long

Bob Scott

John T. Bannock

Morgan Hinkley

Arnold A. Davis

Lois Capps

Mazie Hirono

Don O'Day

Alice d. Hastings

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Charles A. Jorgensen

Vernon J. Ehrlich

Ugo J. Fitts

Ben Carnahan

Grace S. Napolitano

Rush Holt

Rick Melabunt

Jim McAniff

Diana DeGott

Pete Stark

Zoe Loff

Members of Congress whose signatures are affixed to the attached letter:

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